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SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Jerzy ZALESKI (Poland)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security" was included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly in accordance with its resolution 45/60 of 4 December 1990.

2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 18 September 1992, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 2nd meeting, on 8 October 1992, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items allocated to it, namely, items 49 to 65, 68 and 142; and 67 and 69. The deliberations on those items took place between the 3rd and 21st meetings, from 12 to 28 October (see A/C.1/47/PV.3-21). Consideration of draft resolutions on those items took place between the 22nd and 30th meetings, from 29 October to 11 November (see A/C.1/47/PV.22-30). Action on draft resolutions on those items took place between the 31st and 40th meetings, from 12 to 25 November (see A/C.1/47/PV.31-40).

4. In connection with item 50, the First Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Disarmament Commission; 1/

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security (A/47/355);

(c) Letter dated 28 April 1992 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/47/181).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.1/47/L.32

5. On 30 October, Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Venezuela submitted a draft resolution, entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security" (A/C.1/47/L.32), which was later also sponsored by Bhutan. The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of India at the 28th meeting, on 10 November.

6. At its 34th meeting, on 16 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.32 by a recorded vote of 104 to 3, with 28 abstentions (see para. 7). The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia.

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 42 (A/47/42).

Against: France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

7. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security

The General Assembly,

Recalling that at its tenth special session, the first special session devoted to disarmament, it unanimously stressed the importance of both qualitative and quantitative measures in the process of disarmament,

Recognizing that scientific and technological developments can have both civilian and military applications and that progress in science and technology for civilian applications needs to be maintained and encouraged,

Noting with concern the potential in technological advances for application to military purposes, which could lead to more sophisticated weapons and new weapon systems,

Stressing the interests of the international community in the subject and the need to follow closely the scientific and technological developments that may have a negative impact on the security environment and on the process of arms limitation and disarmament and to channel scientific and technological developments for beneficial purposes,

Emphasizing that the proposal contained in its resolution 43/77 A of 7 December 1988 is without prejudice to research and development efforts being undertaken for peaceful purposes,

Noting the results of the United Nations Conference on New Trends in Science and Technology: Implications for International Peace and Security, held at Sendai, Japan, from 16 to 19 April 1990, 2/ and recognizing, in this

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2/ See A/45/568.

regard, the need for the scientific and policy communities to work together in dealing with the complex implications of technological change,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security"; 3/

2. Takes note also of the interim report of the Secretary-General 4/ submitted in pursuance of resolution 45/60 of 4 December 1990;

3. Fully agrees that:

(a) The international community needs to position itself better to follow the nature and direction of technological change;

(b) The United Nations can serve as a catalyst and a clearing-house for ideas to this purpose;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to follow scientific and technological developments in order to make an assessment of emerging "new technologies" and to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session a framework for technology assessment guided, inter alia, by the criteria suggested in his report;

5. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-eighth session the item entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security".

3/ A/45/568.

4/ A/47/355.